(*d*) Yes, in normal years ; but there will be scarcity of water in the dry months in the years of extreme drought.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT.

President : Order, order. Honourable members might perhaps be aware that in another place, I gave a kind of review on the food situation and the developments of that situation. It is only right that I should take this House into my confidence in regard to these matters affecting the policy of Government. And I now proceed to do so.

But before proceeding to discharge that function, let me point out that I have received notices of two adjournment motions. One of these motions is by Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar and it reads :

> 'The business of the House be adjourned for the purpose of discussing a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the inadequate supply of rice to this State and the difficulties in the transport of the same.''

The other motion is by Mr. Fletcher and reads :

> 'I beg leave to move that the business of the House be adjourned for discussing a matter of urgent public importance, namely the serious situation arising out of the compulsory sale of bajra, cholam and wheat to the poor people as a condition necessary for their right to purchase rice for their food.'

Both these matters are of fundamental importance and if the honourable members concerned are willing to club those two together so as to talk on the food situation, I shall be very glad to allow the fullest opportunity to members of this House to discuss their point of view. I would only suggest this, that it is likely that the official business of today may end fairly quickly, before one o'clock. Is it the desire of the House that we should meet at 3-30 or shall we go on straight with the discussion of the adjournment motion ? I leave it for the decision of the House.

(It was decided to continue the discussion of the adjournment motion after the business for the day was finished.)

I find that the proof copy of my speech else where has not been got ready yet and cannot be placed on the table of the House now, but I hope to place the speech to-morrow on the table of the House. As I took over an hour in delivering it and indicated practically all the aspects and points of view and gave the figures, it might be useful to honourable members to have a copy of the speech for their reference. But I shall summarise that speech and give its main features in the remarks that I am now proposing to make.

Firstly, I shall deal with the subject matter of the adjournment motion tabled by Mr. Fletcher, namely, the compulsory sale of other kinds of foodstuffs in addition to rice. In order that

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honourable members may realise the position of this State and the critical nature of the juncture in which we find ourselves, some figures might be useful. Under the Kharif plan of the Government of India, from November 1943 to October 1944, the following are the allotments that have been made to Travancore and Cochin. I shall give the joint figures and then the figures for Travancore separately.

I am dealing with rice to start with. We have to get from Orissa *via* Madras 30 thousand tons of rice for both the States, of which 24 thousand tons are allottable to Travancore. I may pause here and point out that we have not yet received any intimation either from the Government of India or from the Government of Madras to say that they have accepted this arrangement. On account of the operation of Provincial Autonomy, unless the Provincial Government agrees to send us, we shall not be able to get the grains. Whether they have consented or have raised any objections to the Government of India, I do not know. There have been whispers that there may be difficulty with regard to this matter, in which case we shall have to get the 30 thousand tons of rice direct from Orissa and not from Madras. The arrangement that has now been entered into tentatively with the Government of India was as a result of the representations made by me at the last Food Conference, when I suggested that Orissa rice might be supplied to Madras and Madras thereupon might supply rice to Travancore from the Southern Districts like Tanjore and Trichinopoly. The Government of India accepted the suggestion and have suggested to the Madras Government accordingly. That has not yet become a *fait accompli*. It has not yet been accepted by the Madras Government, so that we are not sure whether we shall have to get it direct from Orissa or may be able to get it from Madras.

Baluchistan has to send 80 thousand tons for both the States. We get out of this 6,400 tons. I am glad to say that 400 tons of this have already arrived. Sind has to send us 91,000 tons of rice of which Travancore's share is 72,800 tons, and of that 3,772 tons alone have arrived. The rest is either at the Port of Karachi or on board various sailing vessels which have been utilised by the Government for the purpose. I may pause here for a moment and say that it has been very strongly pressed upon the Government of India by this Government that as the bulk of our supplies of rice has to come from Sind and as the railway communication from Sind to the south of India is very round about, and, it will be seen how round about it is when I describe it—rice from Karachi or Hyderabad has to come to Lahore, from Lahore to Delhi, from Delhi to Nagpur, from Nagpur to Madras, and from Madras either

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to Quilon or Cochin, and if it goes to Cochin, from Cochin to Trivandrum—it was contended by this Government that steps should be taken for procuring sea-borne crafts. There was some considerable difficulty and the difficulty can easily be imagined because at this juncture when the war is on, it is difficult to secure sea-going crafts for this purpose. The Government of India have extended their full co-operation to us and for reasons which I need not detail and which must be confidential when the war is on, certain arrangements have been made with the Government of India which have not yet begun to operate. I got a letter from the Government of India the day before yesterday. I presume that the arrangements will begin to operate about a week from now, and that will mean that the Government of India will help us in regard to transport. Moreover, we have entered into arrangements with the full concurrence of the Government of India with a well-known Steam Ship Company operating in the Bombay coast for giving some of their crafts to us. Therefore, the rice from Sind will come by our own boats and crafts, boats and crafts spared by the Government of India and in other ways. The result is that we hope that this very large amount of 91,000 tons, which is the most considerable amount of single item of our supplies for the coming year, will reach us quickly getting rid of the difficulties of transport which are very great at the present moment. As I have already pointed out, out of the 91,000 tons, of which we are entitled to 72,800 tons, only 3,772 tons have so far arrived, Punjab has to give 8,000 tons of which our quota is 6,400 tons, of which 5,634 tons have already arrived. Coorg has to give us 4,800 tons, Bahawalpur 4,000 tons, and Kashmir 1,600 tons. The net result, therefore, is that the Travancore share of rice which we can expect from November 1943 up to October 1944 is 120,000 tons. Our requirements are in the neighbourhood of 6,00,000 tons, and the utmost that we can get from local source even if more strenuous attempts are made in the future and if large stock-holders are persuaded or somehow made to disgorge their stock, even then the utmost that we can get is between 200, and 250 thousand tons. That means, roughly 2,30,000 tons are our deficit in rice. Therefore practically one half of the food in rice alone will be available for the coming year. That is an inescapable elementary fact. Either the people of Travancore have to starve or they have to familiarise themselves with any food that is sent from outside. Let me recapitulate the position. According to the statistics of the past years, 600,000 tons of food grains are essential for Travancore. The Government of India have definitely said that the maximum rice that can be given to us for one year until the end of October 1944 is 120,000 tons. Assuming that if 120000 tons and our own 250000 tons are added together we get just half of our rice requirements.

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Let me go on to the millets. Bahawalpur, Khairpur and the Punjab have to supply us 18,400 tons, 2,400 tons and 4,000 tons respectively of millets, that is, a total of 24,800 tons.

Maize: Bahawalpur, Patiala, Jhind and other Punjab States have to supply us 5,600 tons and the Punjab 4,000 tons making a total of 9,600 tons.

Then we have various pulses from Hyderabad to the extent of 8,000 tons; 10,000 tons for both the States.

We will get 4,000 tons of maize (broken-rice size) from overseas, *i. e.*, from Australia and elsewhere. We get 1,600 tons of barley from Persian Gulf. We get 12,658 tons of Australian wheat. The allotment for both the States is 15,822 tons of which 12,658 tons have arrived. Therefore, we have in our hands 12,658 tons of wheat that has come from Australia for our requirements.

The position before the Government was therefore a very simple one. This Government had to tell the Government of India either that we wanted nothing except rice, or accept whatever was given. It was not without a struggle that the latter alternative was accepted. This Government pointed out three things; in the first place that the people of Travancore have, for centuries past, been accustomed to eat only rice, in one form or other and that it was very difficult for them to accustom to other forms of dietary. It was also pointed out by me both in personal discussion and in the course of debate that they and the so-called civilized countries like England found, great difficulty during the last war, as the honourable member Mr. Park would probably know, when they laid down rules for the consumption of brown bread instead of white bread. It practically led to a revolt in England and it was a matter of very serious complaint and the Cabinet met, I do not know how often, to discuss the question. The result was that brown bread was forced down the British throat. Whereas in England the white bread is only a secondary article of diet because the people there take meat, fish, vegetables and salads, the position in Travancore is quite different. To a man like me, coming from outside, the diet of the ordinary Travancorean has been a standing mystery and miracle. People here do not use either milk or ghee. They seem to have an abhorrence for ghee, both on medical and Ayurvedic grounds. They do not seem to believe in vegetables. They seem to take either chillies and rice, or rice and chillies; or rice with cocoanut oil and chillies. That being the dietary of the people of Travancore, it was rather incomprehensible to people living in other parts of India and rather difficult to point out to the Government of India that there is a class of people who live on

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cocoanut oil, chilly and rice. But still that task was attempted. But that was not very successful and I shall indicate how and why.

I have received a letter No. PA—319, dated the 31st December 1943, from the Government of India. That is a personal letter. It reads ; "My dear Sir Ramaswami Iyer, will you kindly refer to your letter of the 4th of December". I enclosed in a letter that I wrote to the Government of India an extract from a Calcutta paper called 'The Hindustan Standard' in which it is said "the unfortunate starving people of Bengal are being given bajra. What are we to do? We have never eaten bajra and how are we going to eat it?" 'The Hindustan Standard' wrote a leading article strongly condemning the policy of the Government. I wrote "Travancore is not the only contumacious or deficit unit in the Indian Empire. Here is Bengal also which has got a liking for rice and a dislike for other things. May I bring it to the notice of the Government of India". This is the answer I got to that letter :

> Will you kindly refer.....regarding the complaint about the inconveniences caused by the allotment of bajra along with rice for Bengal. I regret the delay in replying to it, but I have been anxious to carry out a comprehensive review of our resources of rice, and of what more we could give you before dealing with the vexed question of substitute grains. I also wanted to study Hance's report"

The Director-General of Medical Services of India was sent by His Excellency the Viceroy to survey the food situation in Travancore and Cochin. He came here, and his coming here was very timely. Just about that time we had received wheat flour which was not only not fit for human consumption, but was unfit for cattle consumption also. I placed that wheat flour before the Director-General of Medical Services and suggested that if he tried it, he might perhaps revise his opinion about the allotments that were made. He rather agreed with us on that matter, and an improvement in the situation may be expected. I want honourable members to pay special attention to the following sentences :—

> "We are aware that Travancore and Cochin have repeatedly asked for a larger allotment of rice than millets and if we have not been able to give more rice to Travancore that is because the resources at our disposal have not permitted us to do so. The position as we see it has been set out in our official letter to you of the 31st December and I cannot do better than to enclose a copy of it. It seems to us that the sooner Travancore and Cochin face the facts that at best they are unlikely to get more than about 40 per cent. of their requirements in rice and that they must use substitute foodgrains in an increasing measure, the better. Indeed if the present scarcity results in some change in the dietary habits of the people of Travancore and Cochin as a permanent measure, it will have conferred some lasting benefit."

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The formal letter is as follows :—

'As nearly as April 1943, a circular letter was issued by the Government of India to the principal rice-consuming areas in the country drawing their attention to the fact that there was little or no likelihood of covering the rice deficit, at least during the war, by imports from other sources, and the chief rice-consuming areas were therefore, asked to take steps to increase their consumption of their cereals. The normal deficit of Travancore and Cochin in rice is 450,000 tons a year".

" The quotas allotted to these two States for the year November 1943 to October 1944, are as follows :—

		Tons.
Rice	...	150,000
Millets	...	28,000
Maize	...	7,000
Total	...	1,85,000

In addition, the following rabi grains are likely to be received by Travancore and Cochin during this period :—

		Tons.
(i) Balance of the quotas of wheat under the revised Basic Plan	...	20,000
(ii) Estimated quota of wheat under the new rabi plan	...	30,000
(iii) Estimated deliveries from overseas imports already allotted	...	15,000
(iv) Allotment of Pulses	...	10,000
Total	...	75,000
Grand Total	...	2,60,000

" There is, therefore, an apparent deficit of about 190,000 tons. The Government of India are aware that the demand of Travancore and Cochin is chiefly for rice and will do whatever they can to increase the present rice allotments to the States. On present indications the best that can be hoped for is an additional quota of about 20,000 to 40,000 tons which will reduce the deficit to 1,50,000 to 1,70,000 tons. This fact that there is a deficit of the order of 150,000 tons, which cannot be supplied in rice, must be faced by the State Government and the people made acquainted with the position so that they may realise that they will have to go without the full amount of grain that is needed unless they are prepared to eat substitute foodgrains instead of rice. There is, of course, considerable prejudice to be overcome. People are inclined to be very conservative in the matter of food and, to a certain extent, are prepared to go even with less than the amount necessary instead of meeting the deficiency by taking unfamiliar foodgrains. This prejudice must however, be overcome and every effort made to ensure that substitute foodgrains are brought into consumption more and more.

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The Director-General of the Indian Medical Service has recently visited the States of Travancore and Cochin and has recorded his impressions which show that if progressive deterioration in the health of the inhabitants of Travancore and Cochin is to be avoided, a change in the dieting system is imperative. While it is deplorable from the point of view of administration that foodgrains of a kind which people want are not available in sufficient quantities, it is not so regrettable from that of nutrition, since it means that people will be turning from rice to another grain superior in nutritive value and will, therefore, be getting nearer to a balanced diet.

".....The figures given in paragraph 2 of this letter will show that on the supplies already arranged, or likely to be arranged shortly, Travancore and Cochin are in deficit to the extent of about 1,50,000 tons. On present expectations it is impossible to meet any portion of this deficit in rice but there is a good prospect of further supplies of wheat, millets, bajra and gram being made available. Before making an actual allotment the Government of India would like to know further quantities of these foodgrains the Travancore and Cochin Governments would like to be allotted to them, keeping in mind the facts that these foodgrains are richer in protein content than rice, that fairly large supplies can be allotted immediately, that more rice is not likely to be available and that the alternative, if the supplies of these grains are refused, is that the health of the people of Travancore and Cochin is likely to deteriorate further."

That was the letter I received. Then, when the Government of India was again pressed in the matter, yesterday or the day before I received a telegram from the Food Department to this effect

"We are perfectly prepared if you will waive your claim to millets and pulses, but we do not guarantee any replacement of the supply. ....."

That was the telegram we received. We cannot do without foodgrains from outside and the obvious answer is that if you do not send rice please send these millets which are fit for human consumption. That is the position so far as alternative grains are concerned, and so far as outside resources go.

Now, I shall turn to the internal resources of the State ; but before doing so, a certain amount of financial information would be necessary and useful. Government have invested till the end of Vrischigom 1119 a sum of Rs. 650·17 lakhs on the purchase of foodgrains, against which the total receipts by sales amounted to Rs. 362·95 lakhs, leaving a balance of Rs. 287·22 lakhs to be accounted for on the 1st of Dhanu 1119. As regards local paddy we have purchased for Rs. 90·68 lakhs and have realised 53·34 lakhs. The balance therefore to be realised is 37·34 lakhs. On imports from outside we have invested Rs. 559·49 lakhs and realised Rs. 309·61 lakhs leaving a balance of Rs. 249·88 lakhs. In total we have to realise Rs. 287·22 lakhs.

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[President.]

Now where do we stand so far as the stock here is concerned. I shall presently place the figures before you. We find that notwithstanding our best efforts, not more than 50 per cent of the total amount that was expected in paddy and rice has been collected from the State. And this is notwithstanding control orders and a very large establishment charged with this duty. Let me read those figures :

"For one year from the middle of Dhanu 1119, i. e., for the year 1943, Government expected to purchase a quantity of one crore of paras of paddy on quota and excess bases from land holders and cultivators in the State for equitable distribution and to ease the food situation. Due to failure of crops and other reasons, the whole of the anticipated quantity could not be purchased. The quantity purchased till the middle of Dhanu 1119 (till the end of December 1943) is only 65,36,221 paras. For the year beginning from January 1944, it is estimated that a quantity of one and a quarter crores of paras of paddy can be purchased on behalf of Government. It is hoped that, as a consequence of the enhancement of the price of paddy to B. Rs. 1-8-0. better arrangement for purchase, detection of illicit transport and secret hoardings and greater co-operation from the public as a result of the introduction of State-wide Rationing, not less than 80 per cent of the anticipated quantity could be purchased during the year 1944.

Now, what is the lesson to be drawn from this state of things? The first point is that we cannot keep things going unless there is very active support and encouragement by the Government of India. The support of the Government of India, if it has to be implemented and brought into practice, involves three things. Firstly, control to be exercised by the Government of India over all the surplus Provinces and an equal and reciprocal co-operation on the part of the deficit Provinces and States which have to make the utmost possible efforts to tighten their belts and lessen their margins. The Government of India have their own difficulties in imposing any uniform policy and carrying it out in respect of the whole of India. There are many currents and cross-currents, political and otherwise. It has been the duty, as it has been the habit, of the representative of this Government to insist in season and out of season—that India, cannot be regarded as two or twenty units in the matter of social or economic

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development. Whether it can be regarded so, for political reasons is quite a different matter. Political developments are nothing in comparison with social and economic improvements. What I have insisted is that there must be a central direction and control at Delhi, an authority, composite or single, which will give orders to every single unit which that unit at the peril of extinction must carry out; and at this when the representative of a State in India got up and said that the autonomous nature of the Indian States or the Sovereignty of the Indian States might be affected, I said that any Indian State which did not agree to such a measure of control for the good of India as a whole, might be deposed and annihilated straightaway. That is my definite opinion and I say if any Indian State which has an abundance of supply does not agree to give out of its abundance to other Indian States or units, that Indian State has no right to exist. I have said that and I say it now, and I hope that my words will be carried outside this Chamber. Having said that, nevertheless, we find many difficulties. It is to the glory of Field Marshal Wavell, after he became the Viceroy of India, that he insisted upon the surplus Provinces, Sind and the Punjab, to come to some kind of arrangements in this matter. He has succeeded and I am glad to say that the situation has thereby eased. This is the first point.

The second point that the Government have not been able to bring into operation is the question of price control. What is the good of sending rice from Kashmir and asking us to pay two and a half or three times the local price? What happens today is that we buy at different rates from different administrations, from Sind, from the Punjab, from Bahawalpur, from Bhopal, from the Persian Gulf or Orissa. In every one of these places the price is different. Not only are the prices different, but the transport charges vary considerably. What is the Government to do? The Government cannot fix prices straightaway, because they do not know what rates should be charged from time to time. Day after day, we get telegrams that the price today is so and so, that "You will have to pay this price which we have paid for the consignment you have ordered and we have despatched, but which have not reached you". So, we have to accede to every request, to every demand by any Provincial Government which fixes separate prices and charges those prices from time to time. Therefore, it has been very strongly emphasised and put to the Government of India that a Price Control Scheme for the whole of India is essential. I am glad to say that quite recently there was a Price Control Board representative of the Northern Provinces and as it appears from semi-official agencies, apparently, this conference has led to the result that the Government of India have made up their

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minds to fix ceiling prices. In other words, the basic price of wheat or rice will be so much either for the whole of India or, as was put to them as an alternative, for a particular region. It may be that the Punjab may differ from Bihar or the Central Provinces region. At least, it was contended before the Government of India that separate price levels, fairly stable over a definite period, may be fixed. Evidently, that will be carried out and we are hoping to get an announcement regarding price control and the fixation of the ceiling prices in the course of today or tomorrow. That is so far as price control is concerned.

The three elements that ought to be considered in the matter of procurement and distribution of the foodstuffs are, first, the variety of grain, second, the quantity of grain, and third, price control. Over and above all that is the question of transport. This is what may be called the basic food position of the country.

Now in the other adjournment motion also the question of inadequate supplies of rice and difficulties of transport have been raised. So far as the difficulties of transport are concerned, the difficulties will be much greater in about a month from now than at present, because the whole of the railway system will essentialy and necessarily be concentrated in the north-east of India. For, whatever else is certain, this is certain, namely, that before the monsoon, there will be an invasion programme of the Government of India with regard to Burma and the outlying tracts. In pursuance of that invasion programme, materials have to be rushed from every part of India and from every part of the world to the north-east of India. That being so, we cannot easily expect any improvement in the railway situation, and therefore although Sir Edward Benthall, an old and valued friend of mine, has been always assuring me that he is giving priority in the matter of movement of food grains, we could not expect quick transport due to circumstances beyond his control. Therefore, we have been thrown back upon our resources, and this Government had necessarily to implement their programme, which when it was announced was not wholly taken seriously, namely, that not only now but for the future transport, Travancore would have to depend upon coastal navigation, initiated by Travancore with sufficient facilities in regard to the ocean-going traffic. It was from that point of view, that the Government of Travancore has entered into arrangements for the floatation of a Steam Navigation Company, with a capital of a crore of rupees, of which the State would be taking up 51 lakhs, and for one year, the Dewan of Travancore has agreed to be the Chairman of the Company. That

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Company will be charged with the duty of coastal navigation and of sea-going shipping, and it is expected that in the course of the next few weeks, a public announcement calling for shares will be forthcoming. The problem of transport is not a short-term problem. This problem is going to last, as I said elsewhere and have to repeat it here, for 6, 7 or 8 years. And the programmes we have to charge ourselves with are programmes dealing with the intensification of cultivation, dealing with the extension of cultivation, dealing with industrialisation of the country in order to get enough money to buy food from outside, which are no longer programmes dealing with the luxuries of the moment but with the necessities of the future. This is all I desire to say upon the food situation now.

BILLS ASSENTED TO BY HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA.

The Secretary reported to the Council the following Bills which have received the assent of His Highness the Maharaja :—

1. The Travancore Anchal Act (Amendment) Bill.
2. The Travancore Sale of Goods Act (Amendment) Bill.
3. The Travancore High Court Act (Amendment) Bill.
4. The Civil Procedure Code (Amendment) Bill.
5. The Criminal Procedure Code(Amendment) Bill.
6. The Travancore Medical Practitioners' Bill, and
7. The Travancore Special Marriage and Succession Bill.

PANEL OF CHAIRMEN.

President: Under sub-rule (1) of Rule (3) of the Travancore Legislative Rules, I nominate Messrs. N. Krishna Aiyar and K. K. Kuruvilla to be the Panel of Chairmen for the session.

STATEMENT LAID ON THE TABLE.

Rajyasevapravina A. Lekshminarayana Ayyar: Sir, under Rule 76 of the Travancore Legislative Rules, I beg to lay on the table the following statement of expenditure authorised by the Government under Section 32 of Act II of 1108.

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